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Industrial Disputes, Australia

The number of disputes (strikes or lockouts), employees involved and working days lost; cause of dispute; duration; and the reason work resumed

Reference period March 2022

Released 9/06/2022

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Key statistics

In the March quarter 2022:

- 30 disputes occurred.
- 11,400 employees were involved and 19,600 working days lost.
- disputes occurred in 8 industries and in 6 states and territories.

During the year ended March 2022, there were 134 disputes and a total of 117,000 working days lost.

	Quarter		Year ended	
	December Quarter 2021	March Quarter 2022	March Quarter 2021	March Quarter 2022
Number of disputes				
Commenced in period (no.)	37	22	76	128
Total (no.)	55	30	79	134
Employees involved				
Newly involved ('000)	50.6	10.1	9.6	78.4
Total ('000)	57.2	11.4	9.8	78.9
Working days lost ('000)	68.5	19.6	48.8	117.0

Overview

In the March quarter 2022, there were:

- 30 disputes, 25 less than from the previous quarter.
- 11,400 employees involved, a decrease from 57,200 in the previous quarter.
- 19,600 working days lost, a decrease from 68,500 in the previous quarter.

Year ended estimates:

- 134 disputes occurred, 55 more than in the previous year.
- 117,000 working days were lost, 68,200 more than the previous year.

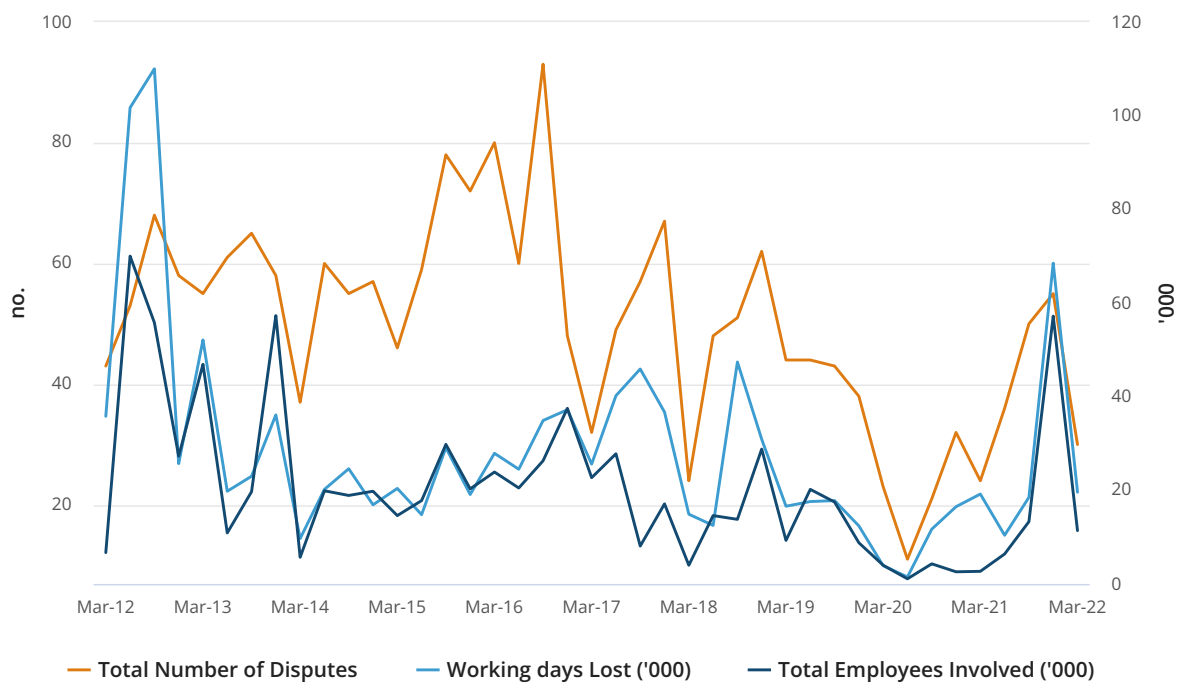
Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter

	Number of disputes		Employees involved		Working days lost
	Commenced in period	Total	Newly involved	Total	
	no.	no.	'000	'000	'000
March Quarter 2020	17	23	2.9	4.0	3.9
June Quarter 2020	8	11	0.9	1.1	1.5
September Quarter 2020	19	21	4.2	4.3	11.7
December Quarter 2020	27	32	2.2	2.6	16.5
March Quarter 2021	22	24	2.3	2.7	19.2
June Quarter 2021	30	36	6.0	6.4	10.4
September Quarter 2021	39	50	11.7	13.3	18.5
December Quarter 2021	37	55	50.6	57.2	68.5
March Quarter 2022	22	30	10.1	11.4	19.6

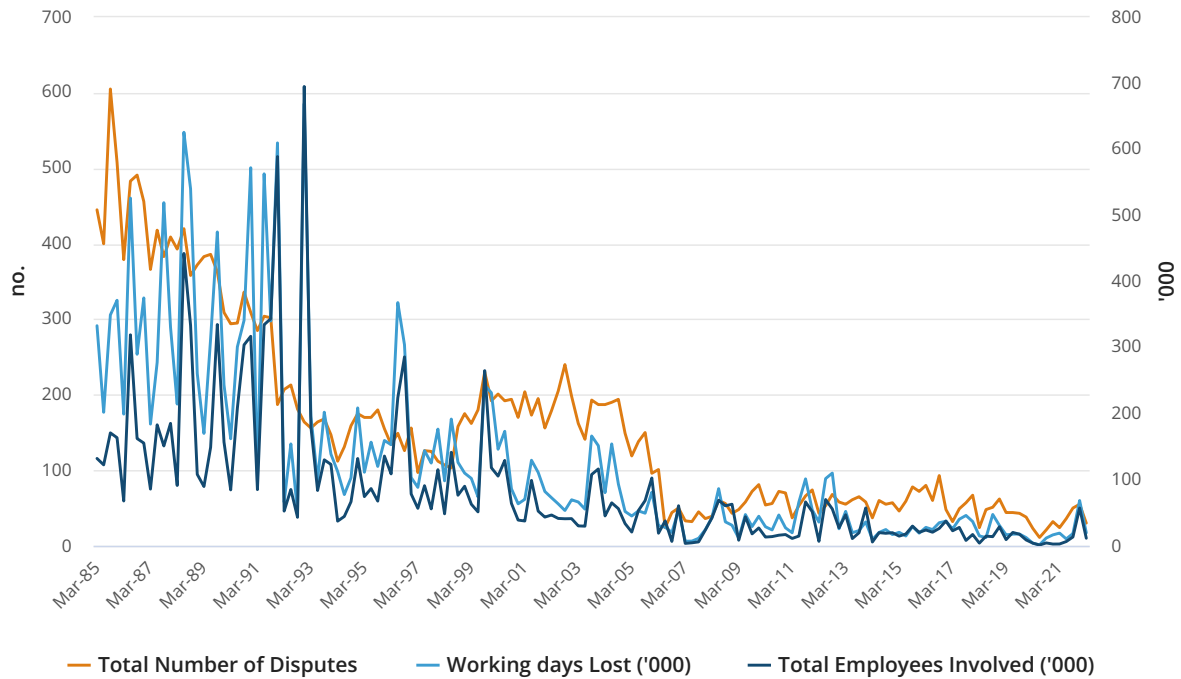
Long-term trends

The level of industrial disputation over recent years is considerably lower than in the 1980's and prior decades.

Industrial disputes in the last 10 years, Australia



Industrial disputes historical series, Australia



Industry

In the March quarter, disputes occurred in eight industries. More than two in five (42%) working days lost were in the Education and training; Health care and social assistance industry.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, industry

	December Quarter 2021		March Quarter 2022	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
Mining				
Coal mining	1.2	29.3	np	np
Other mining	-	0.2	0.2	0.7
Manufacturing				
Metal product etc (a)	2.5	8.0	np	np
Other manufacturing	4.2	8.4	1.8	3.8
Construction	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.7
Transport, postal and warehousing	11.4	19.8	0.8	1.4
Education and training; Health care and social assistance	44.0	15.5	8.2	2.8
Other industries (a)	4.0	0.6	6.6	1.0
All industries	68.5	5.7	19.6	1.6

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

a. See [Glossary \(https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/methodologies/industrial-disputes-australia-methodology/sep-2020#glossary) - Industry - for details of industries included.

np not available for publication but included in totals where applicable, unless otherwise indicated

States and territories

Disputes occurred in six states and territories in the March quarter, with three in five (60%) working days lost occurring in New South Wales.

Industrial disputes which occurred during the quarter, states and territories

	December Quarter 2021		March Quarter 2022	
	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees	Working days lost	Working days lost per thousand employees
	'000	no.	'000	no.
NSW	52.1	14	11.7	3.1
Vic.	7.8	2.5	np	np
Qld	3.8	1.6	2.9	1.2
SA	2.0	2.4	1.5	1.8
WA	2.3	1.8	np	np
Tas.	0.2	0.7	-	-
NT	-	-	-	-
ACT	0.3	1.5	-	-
Australia	68.5	5.7	19.6	1.6

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Cause of dispute

Most industrial disputes are Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related. Over the past 10 years, disputes over employment conditions have generally been the most prevalent.

EB related issues were the cause of 94% of disputes (44 of 47) which ended in the December quarter 2021.

Cause of disputes which ended during the quarter

	September Quarter 2021			December Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Enterprise Bargaining (EB) related						
Remuneration	7	0.2	0.8	11	np	np
Employment conditions (EB)	18	4.6	7.0	31	8.5	27.3
Other EB related	-	-	-	2	0.1	0.1
Non-EB related						
Remuneration	-	-	-	-	-	-
Employment conditions	1	0.7	0.5	1	np	np
Health and safety	5	0.7	0.9	1	1.0	1.0
Job security	-	-	-	-	-	-
Managerial policy	-	-	-	1	44.0	44.1
Union issues	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Non EB related	1	0.9	0.5	-	-	-
Total	32	7.2	9.6	47	54.5	76.1

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Working days lost

Working days lost is a measure of the length of a dispute, relative to the number of employees involved.

Of the 47 disputes which ended in the December quarter, 12 lasted for 10 days and over. These disputes had:

- 700 total employees involved; and
- 12,400 working days lost.

Working days lost for disputes which ended during the quarter

	September Quarter 2021			December Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Up to and including 1 day	17	5.9	4.6	12	1.9	1.7
Over 1 day and up to including 2 days	5	0.2	0.3	12	47.4	48.5
Over 2 and less than 5 days	6	0.9	2.5	9	4.4	13.0
5 and less than 10 days	4	0.3	2.3	2	0.1	0.6
10 days and over	-	-	-	12	0.7	12.4
Total	32	7.2	9.6	47	54.5	76.1

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

Reason work resumed

The reason work resumed relates to the last day of action taken. Resumption of work can occur without resolution to the issues that triggered the dispute.

There was a pre-determined return to work for 72% of disputes (34 of 47) which ended in the December quarter 2021.

Reason work resumed for disputes which ended during the quarter

	September Quarter 2021			December Quarter 2021		
	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost	Total Number of Disputes	Total Employees Involved	Working days Lost
	no.	'000	'000	no.	'000	'000
Negotiation without intervention of a third party	4	0.3	1.1	8	0.9	8.5
State legislation	-	-	-	-	-	-
Federal legislation	-	-	-	1	np	np
Pre-determined return to work	24	4.9	7.2	34	52.1	66.2
Resumption without negotiation	4	2.1	1.3	1	1.0	1.0
Mediation	-	-	-	3	np	np
Other reasons	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	32	7.2	9.6	47	54.5	76.1

- nil or rounded to zero (including null cells)

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Data downloads

Time Series Spreadsheets

[Download all \(477.52 KB\)](#)

Table 1: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period

[Download XLSX](#)

[58.65 KB]

Table 2a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, industry

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[53.31 KB]

Table 2b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, industry

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[53.04 KB]

Table 3a: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[63.27 KB]

Table 3b: Industrial disputes which occurred during the period, working days lost per thousand employees, states and territories

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[62.03 KB]

Table 4a: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, cause of dispute

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[90.77 KB]

Table 4b: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, working days lost per employee involved

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[62.59 KB]

Table 4c: Industrial disputes which ended during the period, reason work resumed

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[77.34 KB]

ABS website changes

Update to thematic grouping and navigation on the ABS website

Labour themes and navigation on the ABS website have changed

The thematic groupings and navigation for labour statistics on the ABS website have been updated to better reflect the current range of available labour statistics, better align key labour market concepts with website themes and navigation, and improve discoverability.

The changes were implemented on the ABS website on Friday 25 March 2022.

The new themes are:

- Employment and unemployment
- Jobs
- Earnings and working conditions
- Labour Accounts

Industrial Disputes statistics moved from the 'Earnings and work hours' theme (abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-work-hours/) to the renamed 'Earnings and working conditions' theme (abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/).

Inquiries

For inquiries about these and related statistics, contact the Customer Assistance Service via the ABS website Contact Us page. The ABS Privacy Policy outlines how the ABS will handle any personal information that you provide to us.

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6321.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Industrial Disputes, Australia methodology, March 2022](#)